

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O M E 1 7 5 5

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, TO, RQ

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: PUERTO RICO

1. DCM RAISED QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO IN COURSE OF WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION AUGUST 6 WITH SECGEN OF FOREIGN MINISTRY DE MEDEIROS. NOTING THAT WHEN AMBASSADOR HAD DISCUSSED PUERTO RICO WITH EYADEMA DAY BEFORE THE PRESIDENT HAD REPLIED THAT ISSUE WAS NOT ON NAC AGENDA, DCM SAID IT WAS U.S. EXPECTATION THAT CUBA WOULD ATTEMPT TO PLACE QUESTION BEFORE NAC. DE MEDEIROS AGREED THIS LIKELY. HE PULLED OUT THICK BOUND DOCUMENT MADE UP BY MFA IN PREPARATION FOR NAC AND, APPARENTLY READING FROM THE AGENDA, SAID THAT ITEM ON "OTHER COLONIAL ISSUES" OFFERED CLEAR OPENING.

2. DCM RECALLED PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF THIS ISSUE BETWEEN EMBASSY AND GOT OFFICIALS, AND ASKED IF TOGO UNDERSTOOD AND COULD SUPPORT US POSITION THAT PUERTO RICO SHOULD NOT BE MADE AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. DUCKING SPECIFIC QUESTION, DE MEDEIROS "SPEAKING PERSONALLY" PREDICTED THAT IT ALMOST INEVITABLE THAT NAC WOULD PASS RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO. IN RECENT YEARS NAM HAD BECOME POWERFUL FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. FORMER COLONIES AND ESPECIALLY SMALL COUNTRIES TOOK COMFORT IN GROWING SOLIDARITY OF NAM. BASIC TO THIS UNITY WAS OPPOSITION TO ANY REMNANTS OF COLONISLISM. THAT EAR WAS OVER. PUERTO RICO
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MEANT LITTLE TO TOGOLESE PEOPLE, BUT THIRD WORLD SOLIDARITY

VERY IMPORTANT TO THEM.

3. DCM SAID CUBANS HOPED TO ACHIEVE NAC RESOLUTION BY CONSENSUS, THEN ASSERT RESOLUTION IS A COMMITMENT BY NAM MEMBERS TO VOTE FOR UNGA RES ON PUERTO RICO. IF SUCCESSFUL, RESULT WOULD BE COMPLETELY UNREALISTIC UNGA RESOLUTION; QUESTION OBVIOUSLY NOT ONE OF COLONIALISM SINCE, SO FAR AS USG CONCERNED, PUERTO RICANS FREE TO HAVE INDEPENDENCE AT ANY TIME THEY CHOOSE. SUCH RESOLUTIONS HURT THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES SINCE IT MADE VERY DIFFICULT FOR DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO RECOGNIZE AND TAKE SERIOUSLY LEGITIMATE THRID WORLD ASPIRATIONS. DCM HESITATED TO PREDICT EFFECTS ON US PUBLIC OPINION OF POSSIBLE RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO BUT OBVIOUSLY SUCH TACTICS DID NOT ENCOURAGE COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. ONLY COUNTRIES WHICH ARE SEEKING CONFRONTATION WILL GAIN.

4. DE MEDEIROS AT FIRST DENIED THAT ANY THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WANTED CONFRONTATION. THEN SAID MANY POLITICAL TENDENCIES ARE IN NAM. INDIA IN PARTICULAR VERY OPPOSED TO RADICAL ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE NAM. DCM SAID IT SOMEWHAT UNFAIR THAT US WHICH REPRESENTS PUERTO RICO INTERNATIONALLY COULD NOT PRESENT ITS SIDE OF CASE AT CONFERENCE. DE MEDEIROS SAID US FRIENDS LIKE SENEGAL, LIBERIA AND IVORY COAST WOULD QUESTION CUBANS CLOSELY AND WOULD CHALLENGE CUBAN ASSERTIONS, SUCH AS US-SUPPRESSED PUERTO RICANS WHO SUPPORTED INDEPENDENCE. DCM HOPED TOGO WOULD POINT OUT IN SUCH A SITUATION THAT PUERTO RICANS RAN OWN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND NO US POLICEMEN WERE ON ISLAND. SECGEN SHRUGGED AND SAID TOGO HAS NO EXPERT ON PUERTO RICO. DCM REGRETTEED EMBASSY DEMARCHES HAD NOT BEEN CLEAR, BUT WOULD ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY ANY QUESTIONS MFA STILL HAD ABOUT PUERTO RICO'S STATUS. DE MEDEIROS PRAISED QUALITY OF EMBASSY AIDE MEMOIRES AND PROMISED TO SEE THEY WERE INCLUDED IN PRESIDENTIAL BRIEFING MATERIALS ON NAC. TOGO FULLY AWARE OF US POSITION AND WOULD KEEP IT IN MIND AT COLOMBO.

5. COMMENT: CONVERSATION SUGGESTS THAT GOT HAS NOT WORKED OUT A TOGOLESE POSITION ON PUERTO RICO IS ADVANCE, BUT WITH BOTH PRESIDENT EYADEMA AND FOREIGN MINISTER HUNLEDE ATTENDING, WILL MAKE DECISION ON SPOT. DE MEDEIROS "PRIVATE" PREDICTION THAT TOGO WOULD BE SWEEPED ALONG WITH CONSENSUS RESOLUTION
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IS NO DOUBT SOUND. ONLY HOPE, AS HINTED IN PARA 4, IS THAT TOGO WOULD NOT TAKE SIDES IF ISSUE BECOMES CONTROVERSIAL IN NAC.

6. DE MEDEIROS WILL NOT ATTEND COLOMBO MEETING, BUT IS INVOLVED IN BRIEFING PRESIDENT BEFORE HE DEPARTS AUGUST 14. FOREIGN MINISTER LEFT LOME AUGUST 5 WITH TEAM OF ADVISORS INCLUDING DIRECTORS OF POLITICAL DEIVISION AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES DIVISION WHO HAVE HAD GOOD EXPOSURE TO US POSITION.

7. THIS CONVERSATION WITH DE MEDEIROS HAS
FRUSTRATING, ALICE-IN-WONDERLAND QUALITY BECAUSE TWO SIDES
PROCEED FROM DIFFERENT PREMISES. US ASSUMPTION IS THAT
FACTS OF CASE SHOULD DETERMINE GOT POSITION. DE MEDEIROS
IS ONLY marginally INTERESTED IN SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO
REALITIES THAT GOVERN GOT STANCE ARE POPULARITY OF THIRD
WORLD MILITANTISM AT HOME, AND SENSE OF POWER AND SECURITY
THAT JOINING A NAM CONSENSUS GIVES A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE TOGO.
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